

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO†

EXCERPTS FROM OUR STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

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From some Editorial Notes:

Important Suit Won.—On January 28 a most important suit against a member of the Society, Dr. C. A. Shepard, was begun in Los Angeles and lasted over a period of seven days' trial, resulting in a verdict for Doctor Shepard. The suit was for \$50,000, and it was alleged that he had fraudulently or untruthfully diagnosed a case of tuberculosis when in truth the patient did not have tuberculosis. . . . Doctor Shepard writes: "I am proud to belong to a State Society that takes such good care of its members in such blackmail cases. The able defense put up by Mr. H. T. Morrow, the attorney for the Society, and the indefatigable efforts of the Secretary of the Los Angeles County Association, Dr. George H. Kress, with the willing assistance of the members of the Society who left their offices and patients to testify on my behalf, is certainly very gratifying." Is it better to keep your dues paid up and get this sort of defense, or to let them lapse and depend on the chances of an "insurance" company's defense?

Chinese Medicine.—The Pacific Coast members of the medical profession have had very definite notions concerning the absurdities of so-called Chinese medicine. Elsewhere in this issue is printed an article on the subject by a medical missionary, Dr. C. R. Roys of Wei-hsien, China, who discusses the subject from a wide and first-hand knowledge. His paper on the subject is, therefore, of real value. Not the least of what Doctor Roys states is the point which he makes, judging from the newspaper advertisements and sign-board publicity of American patent medicines akin to those of the Chinese, that we of our own land are, after all, not so greatly superior to the heathen (?), upon whom we would look down with such scorn and pity.

Medical Bills in the Legislature.—In discussing the various bills which have been introduced in the present legislature, and they are more numerous and more dangerous than at any previous session of the legislature in the history of the State, a few fundamental facts must be remembered.

A license to practice medicine or any mode of treating the sick or afflicted is not a piece of property given to an individual; it is a police license intended for the protection of the people and not for the benefit of the person to whom it is issued.

All such licenses, wherever issued, had their origin in the fact that uneducated and unqualified persons were desirous of making money out of sick people.

As it became harder for uneducated persons to obtain license to practice medicine, other systems or modes of treating the sick or afflicted were "discovered," and the followers of these systems asked for special licensing boards in their special systems, claiming that, as they did not wish to practice "medicine," but merely their special "mode," they should not be required to take the regular examination. But it was quite evident that, as a matter of fact, no matter what they said they *wanted* to practice, they all *actually practiced medicine*; or at least they all treated sick or afflicted persons in whatsoever way they saw fit.

The fundamental point of all laws regulating the requirements for a license for anyone to treat the sick or afflicted, is this:

Before being allowed by the State to treat a sick or afflicted person, the individual should be required to prove that he knows how the body is made (anatomy), how it is supposed to perform its functions (physiology), and what accidents or material afflictions are liable to occur to it.

Senate Bill 510, Gates (same as A. B. 425, Ambrose), is a type of bills lowering standards. It provides for three boards of examiners: "a board of medical examiners, a

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† This column strives to mirror the work and aims of colleagues who bore the brunt of Association work some twenty-five years ago. It is hoped that such presentation will be of interest to both old and new members.

BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA†

By CHARLES B. PINKHAM, M.D.
Secretary-Treasurer

Board Proceedings

Governor Merriam has announced the reappointment of Doctors Clark L. Abbott of Oakland, Percival Dolman of San Francisco, and George Thomason of Los Angeles, as members of the Board of Medical Examiners for terms ending January 15, 1942. Dr. John MacLean of Los Angeles was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Harry V. Brown, deceased, ending January 15, 1939.

News

"Governor Frank F. Merriam last night reappointed Doctors Howard Morrow and William P. Clark, both of San Francisco, as members of the State Department of Public Health." (Sacramento *Bee*, January 28, 1938.)

"Attorney-General U. S. Webb today told C. O. Hunt, Secretary of the Board of Chiropractic Examiners, that a chiropractor may not make chemical tests on a human being. Hunt asked the Attorney-General whether the law requiring licensing of laboratory technicians also required a chiropractor to have a laboratory technician's license if he wished to make chemical tests for his own patients. Webb replied by calling attention to the California law forbidding chiropractors to diagnose. He said chemical tests for patients for the purpose of making a diagnosis would constitute medical practice, and that also is forbidden by law in California." (Associated Press dispatch, dated San Francisco, January 14, and printed in the San Jose *Mercury-Herald*, January 15, 1938.)

"Charges against three Los Angeles doctors whose conviction of participating in a state-wide illegal operations ring was reversed, were dismissed yesterday by Superior Judge Arthur Crum on motion of Deputy District Attorney Vernon Ferguson. The three doctors—Valentine St. John, James Beggs, and Jesse C. Ross—were convicted with eight other persons on charges of conspiracy to perform illegal operations. The State Supreme Court held, however, that corroborative evidence against the doctors was insufficient. Among the others convicted are R. L. Rankin, President of the Medical Acceptance Corporation, now in San Quentin Penitentiary; William Byrne, former State Medical Board investigator, who has applied for probation; and Dr. George E. Watts, who died in San Quentin last year." (Los Angeles *Daily News*, January 29, 1938.)

"A new trial was today denied Dr. G. O. McKeehan, Huntington Park physician, who was recently convicted on one count of conspiracy to defraud an insurance company and one count of grand theft in connection with an asserted 'fake accident' ring. In denying the new trial, Superior Judge Frank M. Smith set February 10 as the date for hearing a probation plea and pronouncing sentence. In his trial the prosecution accused him of treating Thomas G. Nelson, assertedly a member of the ring, for injuries inflicted on Nelson by other members of the 'fake accident' group in a plot to collect insurance benefits." (Los Angeles *Herald and Express*, January 28, 1938.)

"With the case attracting the attention of more than 3,500 associates in the chiropractic business in California, the trial of Dr. L. E. Dollarhide, Long Beach chiropractor, in the Riverside justice court here on March 2, is expected to apply an important test to the California laws governing chiropractors. The Long Beach man, who has patients in Riverside and several other towns of the county, recently was arrested on a warrant charging that he illegally

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† The office addresses of the California State Board of Medical Examiners are printed in the roster on advertising page 6.